

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1 1. Apparatus for intubation of a body cavity or lumen, the apparatus
2 comprising:
3 an endoscope having a steerable tip; and
4 a wire guide,
5 wherein the apparatus is configured to preclude advancement of the wire guide
6 to the steerable tip.
- 1 2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the wire guide is configured to
2 reversibly transition between a flexible state and a substantially shape-locked state.
- 1 3. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the wire guide is configured for
2 advancement relative to a flexible body of the endoscope.
- 1 4. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the wire guide is configured for
2 advancement within a working channel of the endoscope.
- 1 5. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the wire guide is disposed within an
2 overtube, the overtube configured for advancement over the endoscope.
- 1 6. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein a length of the wire guide precludes
2 advancement of the wire guide to the steerable tip.
- 1 7. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the wire guide comprises a hub that
2 precludes advancement of the wire guide to the steerable tip.
- 1 8. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the wire guide comprises a section
2 that remains flexible when the wire guide is disposed in the shape-locked state.
- 1 9. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the overtube comprises a split
2 sheath.
- 1 10. Apparatus for guiding an endoscope having a working channel with a
2 substantially rigid tortuous section, the apparatus comprising:
3 a shape-lockable wire guide configured for advancement through the working
4 channel,

5 wherein the wire guide is configured for relative advancement of the
6 endoscope when the wire guide is shape-locked and disposed within the rigid tortuous
7 section.

1 11. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the wire guide comprises a flexible
2 section that remains flexible when the wire guide is shape-locked.

1 12. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the flexible section is configured
2 for disposal within the rigid tortuous section of the working channel when the wire guide is
3 shape-locked.

1 13. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the flexible section comprises a
2 coil spring.

1 14. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the apparatus is configured to
2 preclude advancement of the wire guide to a steerable tip of the endoscope.

1 15. Apparatus for guiding an endoscope, the apparatus comprising a shape-
2 lockable overtube configured for advancement relative to the endoscope,
3 wherein the overtube comprises a seam for reversibly opening the overtube.

1 16. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the overtube further comprises a
2 rigidizable wire spine configured to reversibly shape-lock the overtube.

1 17. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the seam facilitates reversibly
2 disposing the shape-lockable overtube over the endoscope.

1 18. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the apparatus is configured to
2 preclude advancement of the rigidizable wire spine to a steerable tip of the endoscope.

1 19. A method for intubating a body cavity or lumen, the method
2 comprising:
3 advancing an endoscope within the body cavity or lumen;
4 advancing a wire guide within the body cavity or lumen along the endoscope;
5 shape-locking the wire guide; and
6 advancing the endoscope along the shape-locked wire guide,

7 wherein a steerable tip of the endoscope always extends beyond the shape-
8 locking wire guide.

1 20. The method of claim 19, wherein advancing the wire guide along the
2 endoscope further comprises advancing the wire guide within a working channel of the
3 endoscope.

1 21. The method of claim 19, wherein advancing the wire guide along the
2 endoscope further comprises disposing the wire guide within an overtube, and advancing the
3 overtube over the endoscope.

1 22. A method for intubating a body cavity or lumen, the method
2 comprising:
3 advancing an endoscope within the body cavity or lumen;
4 advancing a split sheath overtube within the body cavity or lumen over the
5 endoscope;
6 shape-locking the overtube; and
7 advancing the endoscope along the shape-locked split sheath overtube.